July 25, 2013

Commissioner Gist

RI Department of Education

255 Washington St.

Providence, RI 02903

Dear Ms. Gist,

We are writing to follow-up on our recent conversation with you at the [Summer Institute in Digital Literacy](http://mediaeducationlab.com/summer-institute-digital-literacy). During our talk we mentioned some of the digital literacy needs Paul Cuffee High School, now in its fourth year, is currently struggling with: difficulty with teacher buy in, and teachers needing a central project in order to focus on implementation of digital literacy goals.

Our staff is working extremely hard to meet all of the needs of our first graduating class. Without broad support it can be difficult for them to find ways to embed digital literacy into the 9-12th grade curriculum. We hope that in partnering with Powerful Voices for Kids, the digital and media literacy professional development program based at the University of Rhode Island,  we can find ways to support staff members in long-term implementation in each classroom.

We would love to put together a proposal that might help us to connect leaders in professional development of digital and media literacy with emerging leaders in digital literacy in Rhode Island schools. With the support of the Department of Education, we can develop a program that strengthens leadership in digital literacy at Paul Cuffee High School and serves as a model for building and sustaining digital literacy across grade levels and subjects in the Rhode Island school system.

At this point, what we would most appreciate from you is a clear idea of whom we should address our proposal to so that we can begin working right away.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to working with you in adding a new and exciting digital literacy distinction to our school and state!

Sincerely,

Leah Lubman, Paul Cuffee Middle & High School Media Specialist

Jillian Belanger, M.A., N.B.C.T., Paul Cuffee ELL Director

David Cooper Moore, Program Director, Powerful Voices for Kids

 Media Education Lab at the University of Rhode Island

Hi, Leah,

Thank you for reaching out to me.  There are so many exciting – and perhaps daunting – opportunities for our students around digital learning.  We are blessed with extraordinary and organic leadership in our state around this issue.  I have copied my colleague Holly Walsh on this email.  She leads our work here at RIDE pertaining to digital and blended learning.  She is the best resource our state has as you begin these discussions with your team.  She will be more than happy to provide you any assistance that she can.

Thanks again for contacting me.  I look forward to hearing more about Paul Cuffee’s plans.

Best,

Deborah

Deborah A. Gist

Commissioner

RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

255 Westminster Street

Providence, RI  02903

[401-222-8700](tel:401-222-8700)

[401-222-6178](tel:401-222-6178) (fax)

[Deborah.Gist@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Deborah.Gist@ride.ri.gov)

[www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov/)

Hi all,

Was going to check in this week about the status of this project -- I'm sure you're all dealing with back to school madness, but we should touch bases about the status of our proposal.

Thanks,

David